Legal Math™ — Quick Start Instructions — Installation and Configuration

Read this: More detailed instructions are available in the file named *Math Instructions.pdf*. This file can be reached from the Windows Desktop by clicking *Start*, then *Programs*. Look for the *Legal Math* folder on the *Programs* menu.

1. If installing from a CD, insert the CD in your CD drive. After a few seconds, the CD will start to spin and the setup process will activate without intervention on your part. Read the setup screens and do what they say.

2. When you first use the program (first time only) you will need to furnish your name and matching Activation Code. The Code was furnished when you first acquired the program. Name and Activation Code must be entered exactly. **Important: Keep the Activation Code where it can be found for future use**.

3. **From the main screen of the program (screen with photo) press "1" to start the Interest Calculation feature:**

    a) Use the **Settings Menu** to set your jurisdiction's "default" interest rate. These may be different for different types of debts (i.e. child support vs. regular money judgments). Most states use simple, not compound interest. You will need to determine your own state's rate and compounding requirements. For child support cases, see also "Grace Period" options described below. There is also a setting to tell the program the order in which you want the payments to be applied: (1) first to interest, then to principal; (2) first to current, then to interest, then to principal; or (3) first to current and past due principal, then to interest.

    b) Set the default period of delay (*Grace Period*), if any, before interest is to be earned (0, 30 or 31 days). This is intended for past due child support calculations in those states where interest does not start to accrue on day one. You may also want to use the option to calculate interest *monthly* rather than *daily*.

    c) Select which text, if any, to use to describe transactions.

    d) Furnish the name of folder for saving data files – this specifies the location where you will save client data files if you want to save them somewhere other than *My Documents\Legal Math\Data Files*.

    e) Set the screen size. There are three different sizes available, each being related to a particular screen resolution.

    f) Set the font size for printing (10 or 11 is best).

Legal Math™ — Quick Start Instructions — Use of Program

Enter all amounts that should have been paid as positive numbers. These are "debt increasing" transactions (e.g. child support installments that are to be periodically paid; loan amount; amount of judgment). The program tracks debt increases and debt decreases, and it needs to know the entire history, up and down.

Enter all payments actually made as negative numbers. (use a minus sign). These are "debt decreasing" transactions (e.g. monthly child support or loan payments actually received; wage garnishments resulting in partial payment).

There is **no need to enter a zero transaction** as a "place holder" for a payment due date.

For money judgments or loans, enter the judgment or loan amount as the first transaction. Then enter payments, if any, as negative numbers. Bring interest to date by entering a zero amount transaction as the final transaction. Give that transaction "today's" date.

Become familiar with the repeat buttons (green and red at lower left of screen) for rapid entry of identical amounts and regularly spaced dates (e.g. recurring child support obligations). It is usually much faster to use the repeat buttons (or keys – **usually the F3 key**) to enter all the amounts that should have been paid, and then enter all the payments, if any, that were actually made. This is possible because the program sorts transactions into chronological order before it calculates. Rapid entry is available for monthly, bimonthly, every two weeks, weekly and 1st / 15th obligations.

Transactions can be entered in any order. When calculating, the program will **sort all transactions into the proper chronological order** regardless of the order in which you enter them. This happens when you click the "Calculate" button.

Entering Dates. When a date is called for by the program, you can type the date using almost any format that feels comfortable. Use names of months or numbers. Use slashes, dashes or spaces. The program will try to interpret what you mean. The program is smart about dates. As a result, it will usually be right in converting your date to the familiar "computer looking" date.

To type a date in the current year, there is no need to type the year part of the date. Thus, in 2009, typing 9 25 will be translated to September 25, 2009. In 2010, typing 9 25 will be translated to September 25, 2010.

There is no need to type zeros in dates. 9 25 is as good as 09 25.

There is no need to enter anything in the four right hand columns (they are for you own notes). The program only needs to know amounts and dates in order to do its job. Use the "Enter" key, not the "Tab" key, when done entering data in column 1 (transaction amount) and when done entering data in column 2 (date of transaction). The Enter key will then take you to the next row rather than to the third column. This will let you easily skip the four right hand columns. Use the "Tab" key (or the mouse) to put the data entry point in any of the right hand columns.

The program will calculate through and including whichever date you choose. This feature lets you bring interest "to date" or do a partial calculation as may be needed:

    a.   To include all transactions in the calculation, you will probably want to "bring interest to date". To do so, enter zero as the last transaction amount. Then date this zero transaction with the date through which you want to calculate. With the cursor below the zero transaction, click the "Calculate / Print" button. (All transactions can also be included if you place the cursor on the first transaction in row one.)

    b.   To do a partial calculation, place the cursor below the last transaction you wish to include. Then click the "Calculate / Print" button.

Previously accrued interest can be entered by clicking the **"Prior Interest" button.** This feature lets you account for previously determined interest. (e.g. interest included in a judgment when you are now determining the amount of interest earned from the date of judgment forward in time.)

Add a missed, forgotten or new transaction at the end, regardless of its date. This is possible because the program sorts transactions into chronological order before it performs its calculations.

Delete a transaction by putting a check in the box in the "Delete" column. The "marked" transaction will be deleted when you calculate. Remove the check mark if you change your mind about deleting.

If compounding, read the three compounding interest items under "Special Compounding Info" in the Help Menu. Compounding with irregular payments is tricky biz.

Rate changes may have unexpected effects. You will not be able to change the *compounding frequency* in mid stream. And *when compounding, you probably do not want to change the rate in mid stream.*

When compounding, in order to change the rate or the compounding frequency, it is usually necessary to prepare multiple sets of calculations - each subsequent set starting with the total of the prior set. If compounding, read the "Special Compounding Info" in the Help Menu. Compounding with irregular payments is tricky biz.

Using the keyboard is better than using the mouse. You can avoid activating irritating data entry error messages by keeping your hand off the mouse when entering data. The program cannot do its job if there are bad dates or empty cells. Don't try to skip an empty cell and don't wait to fix a problem until later. Fix it when it happens.

Use the "r" key to *reverse* the sign of a transaction. Highlight a transaction and press the "r" key. The "r" key can be used to fix a data entry error. The biggest mistake users make is to forget to put a minus sign in front of a payment transaction. The "r" key will fix this error.

Click and read all of the yellow "?" buttons, and open and examine all items on the **Help** and **Settings** menus.

Open and examine the case called "*sample*".

Web site: The Customer Support page at the web site at ***www.legalmath.com/customersupport*** is used to provide update notices and to inform you of important program issues.